## ESPRIT ORCHESTRA 06/07 SEASON

alex pauk music director and conductor

## Xenakis by Esprit soundaXis opening concert

Thursday, June 1, 2006



esprit orchestra

#### Esprit Orchestra Thursday June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006 Alex Pauk Music Director & Conductor

Flute

Douglas Stewart Christine Little

Piccolo

Maria Pelletier Diane Aitken

Oboe

Lesley Young Hazel Newton

English Horn

Karen Rotenberg Barbara Bolte

Clarinet

Max Christie Greg James Shalom Bard

**Bass Clarinet** 

Micah Heilbrun Colleen Cook

Bassoon

Gerald Robinson Larkin Hinder

Contra Bassoon

William Cannaway Julie Shier

Horn

Garry Pattison Vincent Barbee Michele Gagnon Miles Hearn Bardhyl Gjevori Scott Wevers Piano

Lydia Wong

Trumpet

Robert Venables Raymond Tizzard Michael Fedyshyn Valerie Cowie

Trombone

David Archer David Pell

**Bass Trombone** 

Scott Good

Contrabass Trombone

Mark Bonang

Tuba

Scott Irvine

Percussion

Blair McKay Trevor Tureski Ryan Scott Graham Hargrove Romano Dinillo Craig Snowden

Violin 1

Fujiko Imajishi Concertmaster Corey Gemmell Shane Kim Nancy Kershaw Hiroko Kagawa Bethany Bergman Natalie Deschenes Liana Berube Rebekah Wolkstein Violin 2

Jane Maddison Anne Armstrong Louise Pauls Nicole Zarry Etsuko Kimura Malou Sobrevinas Stephanie Soltice Valerie Sylvester

Viola

Katharine Rapoport Rhyll Peel Johann Lotter Anthony Rappoport Anna Redekop Elspeth Thompson Karen Moffatt Eric Paetkan

Cello

Paul Widner Marianne Pack Olga Laktionova Jill Vitols Orly Bitov Alex Grant

Bass

Robert Speer Peter Pavlovsky Hans Preuss Brian Baty Troy Milleker Natalie Kermerer





#### esprit orchestra

#### Alex Pauk, Music Director & Conductor

Thursday June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006 Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts

> 8:00 p.m. - CONCERT 7:15 p.m. - pre-concert composers talk

#### **PROGRAMME**

Hommage à Vasarely

John Rea

Alexina Louie

#### INTERMISSION

Imaginary Opera

- 1. Prologue
- 2. By The River
- 3. Frozen Rain
- 4. Pursuing The Dragon

#### **INTERMISSION**

Jonchaies

Iannis Xenakis

ESPRIT DRCHESTRA 06/07 SEASON

Bates to mark in your calendar Esprit Orchestra 2006-07 Season Sunday, October 22, 2006 Sunday, November 26, 2006 Sunday, February 11, 2007 Sunday, May 13, 2007



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## ALEX PAUK MUSIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR

Alex Pauk, composer, conductor, educator, revitalized orchestral life for composers across Canada in 1983 by founding Esprit Orchestra as Canada's only orchestra devoted to new music. Esprit, with a core of 50 top instrumentalists, Canada's best soloists, and an annual subscription series in Toronto, encourages composers to take bold new directions. Through building and sustaining Esprit's high calibre performances, commissioning programme, innovative programming (80% Canadian), recordings, performing arts videos and DVDs, Toward a Living Art Education Programme, In Your Space outreach initiatives, tours and International relations, and interdisciplinary arts and media ventures, Pauk has been a leader in developing and promoting Canadian music at home and abroad. As a conductor he attains excellent performances on stage and in recordings. All Esprit concerts are recorded for broadcast on CBC Radio and/or Internationally. His innovative programming and commitment to the community through Esprit have garnered SOCAN and Chalmers Awards as well as three Lieutenant Governor's Awards. He was named Musician of the Year (1999) by peers at the Toronto Musicians' Association and he has helped many composers advance their careers through commissions, high profile performances, recordings and broadcasts. Pauk's recordings of music by Canadian composers Chris Paul Harman and Brian Current helped them win, respectively, prizes in the International Rostrum of Composers (Paris) and Barlow (USA) competitions. Pauk's commissioning, of Canadian composers of all ages and stylistic trends, is central to his work. His six CD's featuring Canadian music on the CBC Records Label are important in the overall catalogue of CDs in Canada and his work with performing arts filmmaker Larry Weinstein of Rhombus Media, with projects such as Ravel's Brain, have set new standards in the genre. Since 1985, Pauk's Toward a Living Art Programme with Esprit has provided approximately 1,500 students annually with a range of experiences; "sitting in" with Esprit musicians at rehearsals and performances, composing for Esprit, attending special student concerts and workshops, receiving free concert tickets and study guides. Pauk has been a leader in taking new music out of the concert hall and to people in their communities with performances in unusual locations such as the CN Tower, night clubs, Toronto Public Libraries etc. He has provided opportunities for choreographers and dancers, stage and lighting designers, actors and directors and media and visual artists to combine their talents with Esprit in adventurous cross-disciplinary projects. Pauk has lead Esprit on several Canadian tours (including Calgary Winter Olympics Arts Festival 1988, Western Canadian Tour 1998, and Montréal/Nouvelles Musiques Festival 2005) and in 1997 initiated an ongoing exchange and touring project with The Netherlands, a venture which included Esprit's debut European tour in 1999 and remains vital to this day.

Alex Pauk has a very wide range of experience as a composer with works for every kind of performing ensemble (some including electroacoustic sound), the theatre as well as dance companies. Revealing this depth of experience, his most notable compositions of recent years include; *Touch Piece*, a multimedia work for full orchestra, 16 channel surround sound with digital sound track, sounds of nature and altered orchestral sound projected from loudspeakers, multi-screen video environment (images of nature and the Cosmos) and fabric sculptures with special theatrical lighting; *Farewell to Heaven*, a full length work for the Menaka Thakkar Indian Dance Company (blending Southeast Asian musical elements with Western orchestral sounds); three works involving important Canadian virtuosos: *Concerto for Harp and Orchestra* (Erica Goodman harp), *Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra* (Duo Turgeon pianos) and *Flute Quintet* (Robert Aitken flute with Cuarteto Latinoamericano). Currently Pauk is composing a work for large ensemble commissioned by La Société de musique contemporaine du Québec.

#### JOHN REA COMPOSER

A professor at McGill University in Montreal, **John Rea** takes both a 'dialectic' and a 'non-doctrinarian' approach to composing music. He alternately uses and resolves the poetics that arise from projecting acoustics and the poetics or theatricality of enhanced narrations.

Rea's approach is dialectic in nature and will that is, in composing music, he weighs contradictory elements to resolve their real and apparent contradictions.

He tends to favor the notions of 'discourse and observer.'

On one hand, Rea is interested in conveying the 'interior' of musical architectures, and charting the movements within them through time, as seen in *Vanishing Points*, *Over Time* and *Time and Again*, three orchestral pieces; *Objets Perdus*, for a string quartet; *Les Raisons des forces mouvantes*, for a string quartet and flute; and *Treppenmusik*, for a twelve-piece ensemble.

On the other hand, Rea can be said not just to 'compose,' but to 'construct' music. He builds an 'exterior,' which we can hear in compositions where he uses evocative text, argument, and/or titles that direct us to notice an arrangement of concrete images, say. Such concrete images in Rea's music can seem to exist outside the music itself.

This technique which he describes as 'reflection and self-reflection' can also be found in: Les Jours, a ballet for a concert band; Les Meninas, for a piano solo; Zefiro torna, for an orchestra; Music, according to Aquinas, for a chamber choir; and in several of his melodramas. The most recent of Rea's melodramas (2001) is Sacrée Landowska for harpsichordist / actress and chamber ensemble. The selection in this evening's program, Alma & Oskar, figures among this latter category of techniques.



### ALEXINA LOUIE COMPOSER

Alexina Louie has been widely commissioned and performed by Canada's leading orchestras, new music ensembles, chamber groups and soloists. Her music emphasizes craft and imagination stemming from a wide variety of influences from her Chinese heritage to her theoretical, historical and performance studies. Through an on-going investigation of scores, recordings, literature, poetry and visual arts, combined with introspection and continuous composition, Alexina Louie has developed a uniquely personal style rooted in a blend of East and West.

Notable performances include the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra's performance of *The Ringing Earth* for the gala opening of Expo 86, the Montreal Symphony Orchestra's performance of the same work in the United Nations General Assembly on United Nations Day (1989), the Toronto Symphony Orchestra's tours of Europe (1986) and the Pacific Rim (1990), and pianist Jon Kimura Parker's performance of *Scenes from a Jade Terrace*, on the programme for the gala opening of the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo (1991).

1993 marked the world premiere of *Gallery Fanfares, Arias and Interludes*, a one-hour work commissioned by the Art Gallery of Ontario for the opening ceremonies of its new gallery spaces and renovations. In 1993, Louie's *O Magnum Mysterium: In Memoriam Glenn Gould* was performed by the BBC Symphony Orchestra. It was performed again in 1994 by the St. Louis Symphony, Leonard Slatkin conducting.

In 1992, Louie, winner of two JUNO Awards, received the SOCAN Award for being the most frequently performed Canadian composer the second time she has received the award since it was established in 1990. In 1994, she was presented with the Chalmer's Award National Music Award for the vocal movements of *Gallery Fanfares, Arias and Interludes*. Louie has served as composer-in-residence at several music festivals including the 1993 Scotia Festival, the 1994 Vancouver Chamber Music Festival, the 1996 Boris Brott Summer Music Festival and the 1999 Banff Arts Festival.

Among the highly-regarded conductors who have performed Louie's music are Kazuyoshi Akiyama, Mario Bernardi, Sir Andrew Davis, Charles Dutoit, Gunther Herbig, Alexander Lazarev, Keith Lockhart, Alex Pauk, Leonard Slatkin and Bramwell Tovey.

From 1996 to 2002, Alexina Louie was composer-in-residence at the Canadian Opera Company, for which she developed a main stage, full-length opera, *The Scarlet Princess*, with Tony Award-winning playwright David Henry Hwang (M. Butterfly). Their erotic ghost story, based on a seventeenth-century Kabuki play, was given its full concert premiere by the Canadian Opera Company on April 23, 2002 in Toronto. Wes Blomster of www.andante.com wrote "The Asian element is no mere *chinoiserie* that ornaments the music, but a careful integration of slithering strings, a bevy of gongs, bowed cymbals and percussive piano, into a richly colored tapestry for large orchestra. Relentless force plus disciplined dissonance mark the score as modern, while moments of spell-binding lyricism supported by near-Straussian opulence give it warmth. ... it is a work of weight, profundity and promise."

Louie's film work includes co-writing, with Alex Pauk, the orchestral soundtrack for Don McKellar's feature film *Last Night* (winner of the Prix de Jeunesse, Cannes Film Festival, 1998). The score received a 1998 Genie nomination for Best Original Score and the music has been released as a CD on the Sony Classical label. Louie and Pauk also co-wrote the score for Jeremy Podeswa's feature film *The Five Senses* which garnered praise both at the 1999 Cannes Film Festival, where it was premiered, and the 1999 Toronto International Film Festival. They have recently completed the score for Barbara Willis Sweete's *Perfect Pie*, a Rhombus Media feature film based on a Judith Thompson play. The film will be premiered at the 2002 Toronto International Film Festival.

Recent film and television projects include collaborative scores with Alex Pauk for the made-

for-television movie *After the Harves*t, directed by Jeremy Podeswa, *24fps*, a short film commissioned to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Toronto International Film Festival and *Ravel's Brain*, a Rhombus Media docu-drama directed by Larry Weinstein.

A CBC Records compact disc comprised entirely of orchestral music by Louie was released in June, 1999. Performances on the disc are by the National Arts Centre Orchestra, conducted by Mario Bernardi with soloists Russell Braun, baritone, and Martin Beaver, violin. *Music for a Thousand Autumns*, the second CD devoted exclusively to her music, is released on the occasion of this evening's concert on the Centrediscs label.

In October 1999, the Jules Leger Prize in chamber music was awarded to Dr. Louie for her string ensemble composition *Nightfall*. In November of 1999, the world premiere of Dominique Dumais' choreography for Louie's *O Magnum Mysterium: In Memoriam Glenn Gould* was unveiled at the National Ballet of Canada in Toronto.

Toothpaste, Louie's 5-minute tragic opera buffa, with libretto by Dan Redican, has been made into a Bravo!FACT music video, as well as an interactive DVD which can also be accessed on the Internet at toothpastetv.com. This mini-opera has captured world-wide attention at its screenings at MIDEM (Cannes) and INPUT (Rotterdam) and has been purchased for broadcasts and screenings in The Netherlands, Germany, Finland and Taiwan.

Louie is active as an arts advocate and has served on the Boards of the Toronto Arts Awards and The Corporation of Roy Thomson Hall and Massey Hall. She currently serves as a Director of SOCAN (Society of Composers and Music Publishers of Canada), the SOCAN Foundation, The Governor General's Awards in the Performing Arts, Esprit Orchestra and Bravo!FACT. As well, she is in demand as a speaker, arts advisor and juror on arts-related matters.

In the Spring of 2002, she was a recipient of the first National Arts Centre Award, a new prize spanning a 4-year period of creative activity with the National Arts Centre Orchestra. During this time, Dr. Louie will compose three new works for the orchestra and will also develop outreach and educational projects.

In August 2000, Ms. Louie and Supreme Court Justice Louise Arbour were special guests of Governor General Adrienne Clarkson on her first official tour of the Northwest Territories and in the Fall of 2001, Ms. Louie again traveled with the Governor General on a State Visit of Germany. In 1997, Alexina Louie was awarded an Honourary Doctorate from the University of Calgary and in 2001 she received The Order of Ontario.

Ms. Louie's most recent film composing project was a score for the made-for-television film *The Interrogation of Michael Crowe* directed by Don McBrearty for Court Television in Los Angeles. In November, 2002, Alexina was awarded the prestigious Louis Applebaum Composition Award for excellence in composing for film and television.



#### IANNIS XENAKIS COMPOSER

Iannis Xenakis was born in 1922 into a Greek family residing in Braila, Romania. The sense of being an "outsider" has remained integral to his identity, as the title of a recently published book of interviews signals: "il faut être constamment un immigré." Xenakis lost his mother when he was 5 years old, then was sent off to boarding school on the Greek island of Spetsai at age 10. He studied civil engineering at the Athens Polytechnic, but the German invasion followed by the British occupation drew him into the Resistance, activities from which he would end up near fatally wounded, losing one eye, then later condemned to death. Forced to escape his country, Xenakis ended up in Paris, wanting to study music, but earning a living working as an engineering assistant for Le Corbusier.

His creative and intellectual intensity attracted the attention of both the renowned architect, who delegated architectural projects to him in spite of his lack of professional training, and the composer and pedagogue Olivier Messiaen, who saw in the music he was struggling to produce in isolation an originality deserving of encouragement. Xenakis had his first major succès du scandale with the premiere of Metastasis at the Donaueschingen Festival in 1955, and by 1960, he was able to devote himself entirely to composition.

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Critical of other developments in contemporary music at the time, dominated by the serialists (the ?Darmstadt school?) such as Pierre Boulez, Luigi Nono, and Karlheinz Stockhausen, Xenakis followed his own path, aided by his background in mathematics, engineering and design and by his interest in complex sonic phenomena (rainstorms, street demonstrations, etc.). He incorporated probability theory into his compositional approach, as a means of generating and controlling large-scale events composed of massive numbers of individual elements. He also adopted the sonic entity (texture) as the primary material for the construction of musical form (rather than themes or pitch structures).

For over 40 years, Xenakis created a steady stream of remarkable works and his impact on contemporary music has been of crucial importance. Along with his acoustic works, he has produced a number of important electroacoustic pieces, and a series of multimedia creations involving sound, light, movement and architecture (polytopes). In the domain of computer music, Xenakis was a pioneer in the area of algorithmic composition, and has also developed an approach to digital synthesis based on random generation and variation of the waveform itself. In addition, he designed a computer system utilizing a graphic interface (the UPIC), which has proven to be a liberating, provocative pedagogical tool as well as a powerful environment for computer composition.



#### HOMMAGE À VASARELY JOHN REA

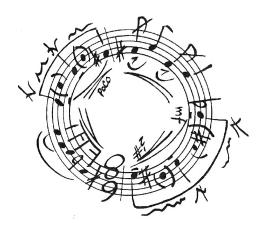
Hommage à Vasarely has for its inspiration the lines and networks, grids, superimpositions and transparencies, and optical-kinetic illusions often experienced in the art works of the great painter and designer. Played without a pause, the composition is divided into five sections.

This composition is designed to be seen during performance as much as it is of course to be heard. For, although the score and its contents do appear to be conventional, they actually comprise a kind of code whose primary task it is to propel undulations of sound-masses about the concert stage, a phenomenon observable be the audience. Thus, every tone, motive, and phrases etc. in the score indicates as much (if not more) about its position in the space delimited by the orchestral disposition, as it does about its very self, that is, about its position inside this work as a piece of music.

One way to understand this situation perhaps is to imagine that the concert stage is a large television screen whose scanning lines (there are only twelve however) travel vertically rather than horizontally. Thus, after the first thirty measures or so, some "images" begin to make themselves apparent. After about seventy measures, the transmission of the abstract patterns seems to be well under way as the images dash back and forth smoothly across the screen.

Another though less evident way to visualize the affair is to think of the score as if it were a photographic negative. Only in performance with an audience experiencing the shapes moving through, or better above, the orchestra does the composition become truly positive black and white so to speak. Consequently, careful attention would have to be taken with the placement of microphones for example when preparing the work for broadcast performance, a stereophonic version being the only genuinely representative one.

- composer's note

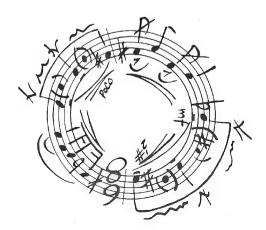


#### IMAGINARY OPERA ALEXINA LOUIE

For flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, piano, two percussions, two violins, viola, cello and double bass

These "scenes from an imaginary opera" (an imagined ghost opera) reveal my long-standing pre-occupation with an integration of Eastern and Western approaches in my music. Much of my music develops from the philosophy of (extreme) contrast and balance rooted in the principles of Yin and Yang. More specifically, one finds the influences of Japanese instruments such as the hichiriki (a small double reed instrument), the shakuhachi (a vertical bamboo flute), and the sho (a multiple-piped double reed instrument), which inspire the use of such devices as bending tones, control of vibrato, and dense chord clusters.

The Prologue reveals many of the compositional elements which are revisited in the following movements. By The River alludes to an imagined dramatic event, moving to a turning point near the end - a heightened emotion after a quiet and mysterious central section. The harmonies slowly but inexorably move to a quiet unison note. Frozen Rain is a compact movement which explores the most ephemeral of sounds. Pursuing The Dragon, a "breakout" movement, is a flash of virtuosic intensity heading toward a finale comprised of a flurry of Chinese opera gongs.



## JONCHAIES IANNIS XENAKIS

for large orchestra commissioned by Radio-France, at the initiative of Claude Samuel

Premiered in 1981, this orchestral piece is both similar and very different from the usual Xenakis' "sound." It begins with a gigantic glissando for the entire orchestra, and there are the sound-masses that characterize much of Xenakis' orchestra writing. But then he creates wonderful harmonies around a simple Phrygian (Japanese) mode melody, and celebratory, steadily phasing rhythms undulating between two tone clusters. A massive and crazed dance develops from simple beats to ragtime syncopation. Great masses of sliding brass sounds like great beasts and sawing strings create a marvellous new texture unheard before in orchestra writing. A uniquely different and attractive manner of writing for this composer.

This piece is inspired by the results obtained and used in the "Legend of Eer", music of the Diatope of the Centre Pompidou, which was completed in the Electronic Music Studio of the Westdeutscher Rundfunk. These

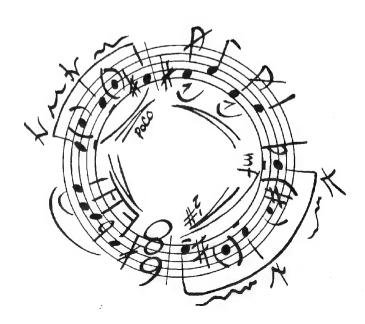
Jonchaies ("rushes, reeds") calls for an orchestra of gigantic proportions: 109 musicians, including quadruple winds (with six clarinets and six horns), six percussionists, and an extra large string section. Parts of the piece are volcanic, with thickly layered, pounding pulsations, or wailing clusters of brass. Other parts, however, are surprisingly delicate, even lyrical.

The long opening section for strings alone) with a few discrete intrusions by the bass drum and temple blocks) is, without a doubt, one of the most melodically expressive passages in all of Xenakis's output. After a dramatic launch, a glissando rocketing up to the high register to fall back slightly to a sustained B6, a modal melody unfolds. As it wends its way slowly down to the mid-low register and then back up again, the melody splits off into six voices, each following more or less the same contour by some degree of delay. The resulting texture is at the same time quasi-imitative and quasi-heterophonic. Each of the six voices is assigned a roughly equal complement of string instruments split into three layers, one bowing the notes normally, the second bowing them and adding a glissando, and the third (not always present) plucking the notes. The resultant additive sonority sounds like an Indonesian gamelan, enhanced by the intervallic structure of the pitch sieve used.

Xenakis had long ago been fascinated by gamelan music, and in particular, the *pelog* scale to which the instruments are tuned. In attempting to emulate such a sonority on Jonchaies, the composer constructed a pitch sieve with a period of seventeen semitones. Each period contains eight intervals, and most striking about the intervals structure is the inclusion of two major thirds and one minor third. These intervals, separated by smaller ones, are what lend the music its modal, Indonesian character. The composer has noted that he found the interlocking fourths of the pelog scale, with the two semitones acting in some sense like leading tones, "a powerful melodic structure," where structure of the melodic scale is very important, not only in melodic patterns-melodies-but also in producing chords of a different timbre. Tension is important for the melodic patterns, the chords, and for the flow of the music itself, the objective statement is made in the contrast between large and small intervals. Tension diminishes if there are too many of one or the other.

The opening melody zeroes in right away on the intervallic structure Xenakis was attracted to

in the Javanese gamelan. The major third is surrounded above and below by a semitone, outlining the interlocking fourths he mentions. The unfolding of the melody proceeds primarily by a steplike motion (from one pitch of the sieve to the next) or by jumping over one note to the next. The difference in sonority between this melodic structure and the chantlike melodies in the choral works written just prior is striking. In those, the contours appear to be freely composed, guided by the prosody of the text and a knowledge of Greek tetrachordal organization. The restricted range allows the flow of the language to proceed in a relatively naral(istic) way. In *Jonchaies*, and many subsequent scores, the intervallic structure of the sieve, which often remains fixed throughout a section or piece, creates a certain identity or "timbre." The periodic nature of the sieve creates uniformity throughout the full range of material, though its non-octaviating structure (where the intervallic pattern does not repeat at the octave) structure has the effect of weakening the tonal implications of the leading tones to create a more mysterious, compelling expression. With six rhythmically independent lines carrying on together, the string sound is certainly complex, but the strong identity of the intervallic structure of the underlying sieve produces a clarity that would otherwise be missing.





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## NOTES



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